

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 10, 12-15, and 20-22 are pending after the amendments. Independent Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to incorporate dependent Claims 11 and 19 respectively, so no new issues are raised.

Withdrawn Claims 7 and 17 have been amended to be in their original form so that when the generic Claims 1 and 15 are allowed, the withdrawn Claims 7-9, 17, and 18 can be reinstated without further amendment.

The Applicants' previous amendments to the claims overcame the Examiner's previous rejection. The Examiner stated on page 6 of the present Office Action,

As to the newly recited limitation in claims 1 and 15: "the first light guide layer, the second light guide layer and the third light guide layer lying in a different plane", neither Evanicky nor Mori explicitly disclose the light guide layer being in a different plane.

Evanicky discloses a warm fluorescent white light bulb (which he calls the red light) coupled to a first light guide and a cooler fluorescent white light bulb (which he calls the blue light) coupled to a second light guide.

Mori describes a single, integral flat panel having red, green, and blue cylindrical light routes throughout the flat panel. Fig. 3 shows the routes lying in the same plane.

In the present amendment, independent Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claims 11 and 19, respectively. The Examiner rejected Claims 11 and 19 as being obvious over Evanicky, Mori, and Wang, as applied to Claims 1 and 15, and further in view of publication JP-2000121296 assigned to Howan Bussan KK (Howen).

The Wang patent 6,104,371 teaches either a single plane of optical fibers (e.g., Fig. 4) or columns of optical fibers, where each column is a different color and all fibers in a single column emit the same color. The output surface of the backlight is perpendicular to the columns (i.e., the light output of the backlight is in the direction of each column).

Applicants' Claims 1 and 15 include the limitation, "wherein each of said first light guide layer, said second light guide layer, and said third guide layer is a transparent sheet,

said first light guide layer overlying said second light guide layer, and said third light guide layer overlying said second light guide layer.” Wang’s embodiments are inconsistent with the light guides being transparent sheets since Wang could not replace his optical fibers with transparent sheets. Wang requires optical fibers stacked in vertical columns so he can create reflectors in each fiber to reflect light upward toward the backlight output surface. This is incompatible with transparent sheets, such as shown in Applicants’ Fig. 3

The Examiner understood the incompatibility of Applicants’ claims with Wang, so the Examiner cites the Japanese publication to Howan for its disclosure of a single light guide sheet (Fig. 2) receiving a single LED color and converting the single color to a different color using fluorescent bumps on the light guide. It is presumed that the Howan fluorescent bumps convert the LED light to white light. This creates the drawbacks described in Applicants’ Background section of the application. The Howan backlight is very different from Applicants’ backlight of Claims 1 and 15. Applicants have multiple layers of transparent sheets, each guiding a different color red, green, and blue.


Howan cannot provide any suggestion of Applicants’ limitation of “wherein each of said first light guide layer, said second light guide layer, and said third guide layer is a transparent sheet, said first light guide layer overlying said second light guide layer, and said third light guide layer overlying said second light guide layer.” Howan is strictly limited to a single sheet converting a single color into presumably white light. The Howan backlight is unrelated to Applicants’ claimed backlight. The Examiner is using hindsight in using Howan’s single sheet to somehow suggest Applicants’ multiple sheets, each guiding a different color.

Additionally, Evanicky is strictly limited to two light guides, each guiding white light. Mori and Howan are strictly limited to a single plane. And Wang is strictly limited to optical fibers arranged in such a way as to be completely incompatible with transparent sheets. Therefore, there can be no combination of the above prior art that can suggest Applicants’ Claims 1 and 15.

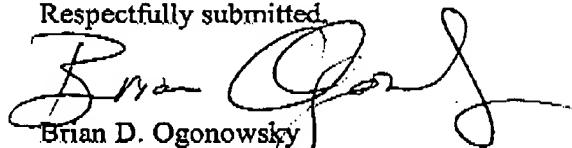
Applicants’ various dependent claims are allowable for at least the reasons for why Claims 1 and 15 are allowable.

Since Claims 1 and 15 are generic, withdrawn Claims 7-9, 17, and 18 can be reinstated upon allowance of Claims 1 and 15.

In view of the above arguments, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims and withdrawn Claims 7-9, 17, and 18. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 ext. 202.

Certification of Facsimile Transmission	
I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on the date shown below.	
 _____ Attorney for Applicant(s)	<u>3/16/04</u> _____ Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,


Brian D. Ogonowsky
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 31,988